



Brownfields Assessment Demonstration Pilot

Waukegan, IL

Outreach and Special Projects Staff (5105)

Quick Reference Fact Sheet

EPA's Brownfields Economic Redevelopment Initiative is designed to empower states, communities, and other stakeholders in economic redevelopment to work together in a timely manner to prevent, assess, safely clean up, and sustainably reuse brownfields. A brownfield is a site, or portion thereof, that has actual or perceived contamination and an active potential for redevelopment or reuse. EPA is funding: assessment demonstration pilot programs (each funded up to \$200,000 over two years), to assess brownfields sites and to test cleanup and redevelopment models; job training pilot programs (each funded up to \$200,000 over two years), to provide training for residents of communities affected by brownfields to facilitate cleanup of brownfields sites and prepare trainees for future employment in the environmental field; and, cleanup revolving loan fund programs (each funded up to \$500,000 over five years) to capitalize loan funds to make loans for the environmental cleanup of brownfields. These pilot programs are intended to provide EPA, states, tribes, municipalities, and communities with useful information and strategies as they continue to seek new methods to promote a unified approach to site assessment, environmental cleanup, and redevelopment.

BACKGROUND

EPA selected the City of Waukegan for a Brownfields Pilot. Waukegan (population 74,166) is located 39 miles north of Chicago along the shore of Lake Michigan. The city's deep-water harbor provides shipping access to the St. Lawrence Seaway for a number of large corporations, and is the base for a vibrant sportfishing and sailing industry.

Like many other older industrial port communities, Waukegan's downtown and waterfront areas are separated by a number of abandoned and underused properties. These brownfields have negatively impacted redevelopment efforts and contributed to the increase in deteriorating neighborhoods and low-income households. The unemployment rate is 9.5 percent; the minority population rate is 46 percent; and 58 percent of the households have low to extremely low incomes. Brownfields have also been linked to threats to human health, fish and wildlife, and soil and water resources. These environmental problems have made potential developers hesitant to invest in brownfields properties.

The Pilot will target six brownfields sites along Madison Street. Redeveloping Madison Street is a key component of the city's larger Waukegan Downtown and Waterfront Revitalization Project,

PILOT SNAPSHOT



Waukegan, Illinois

Date of Award: September 1998

Amount: \$200,000

Profile: The Pilot targets six brownfields properties along the proposed Madison Street Corridor that will link the city's downtown and waterfront areas.

Contacts:

City of Waukegan Building
Department
(847) 625-6879

U.S. EPA – Region 5
(312) 886-3009

Visit the EPA Region 5 Brownfields web site at:
<http://www.epa.gov/R5Brownfields/>

For further information, including specific Pilot contacts, additional Pilot information, brownfields news and events, and publications and links, visit the EPA Brownfields web site at:
<http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/>

which incorporates 20 downtown blocks and hundreds of lakefront acres. Redeveloping brownfields is essential to bridging the divide between downtown and the waterfront and creating economic opportunities for Waukegan.

OBJECTIVES

Waukegan's objective is to revitalize its downtown and lakefront areas by creating a new tax base and new jobs, and by improving public health and safety. This plan will be achieved by linking downtown and the waterfront via an intermodal corridor along Madison Street. Pilot funding will be used to compile brownfields property information (ownership, history of environmental contamination, assessments performed) into a database. This information will then be used to determine which properties along Madison Street should be targeted for further environmental investigation and cleanup. A final objective of the Pilot is to facilitate partnerships among interested stakeholders.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND ACTIVITIES

The Pilot has:

- Identified six sites to be targeted for assessment, cleanup, and redevelopment; and
- Completed Phase I assessments at five sites.

The Pilot is:

- Creating a geographic information system (GIS) database outlining property ownership and environmental assessment status;
- Performing Phase II environmental assessments and identifying cleanup strategies for two key properties;
- Conducting community outreach activities to inform the public about the Pilot's activities; and
- Facilitating the formation of partnerships with property owners, developers, public and private financing sources, and community representatives to develop community-generated cleanup and redevelopment plans.

LEVERAGING OTHER ACTIVITIES

Experience with the Waukegan Pilot has been a catalyst for related activities, including the following:

- The city shares a \$3.5 million grant under EPA's Brownfields Cleanup Revolving Loan Fund program with the Illinois Coalition, which includes the State of Illinois and the cities of Canton, East Moline, Freeport, Galva, and Lacon.